

**Minutes of the meeting of the  
Mount Vernon City Library Board of Trustees  
July 7, 2016**

**Board members present:** Katy Armagost, Bill Craig, Margaret Redfern, Frank Repplier and Hal Verrell (arrived a little late).

**Library staff present:** Director Brian Soneda.

**A. Call to order:** Mr. Craig called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.

**B. Approval of minutes from the June 2, 2016 meeting:** Ms. Armagost asked about the connotation of a word in the Safety and Security part of the minutes; after short discussion she agreed that the original word was fine and moved that the minutes of the June 2, 2016 meeting be approved as submitted. Ms. Redfern seconded the motion; all were in favor.

**C. Visitors:** Bill King, Parks and Enrichment Services Director, was in attendance. Mr. Craig welcomed him on behalf of the trustees and noted that he and Mr. King used to “work across the hall from each other” when Mr. King was at 911.

**D. Surplus Material:** Mr. Soneda noted that due to the late send of the Withdrawn Materials List to trustees, withdrawn materials into early July were included in the list. Ms. Redfern then moved that items withdrawn between June 8, 2016 and July 6, 2016 be declared surplus and transferred to the Friends of the Mount Vernon Library. Mr. Repplier seconded the motion; all were in favor.

**E. Budget Reports:** Mr. Soneda reported that halfway through the budget year, the library was on track and just under half-spent for the year.

**F. Approval of Disbursements:** Ms. Armagost moved that disbursements from Period 6 in the amount of \$15,234.27 be certified as reviewed. Mr. Repplier seconded the motion; all were in favor.

**G. Monthly statistical reports:** Mr. Soneda described June as a month of “mixed results” statistically. Mr. Craig asked about self-check and what the usage goal was for that mode of check out. Mr. Soneda noted that a 2015 goal had been to get self-check as a percentage of total physical item checkouts to 33% by the end of 2015. While the June self check percentage was about 25% and an improvement over the last several months, clearly that fell far short of the goal, even half a year past the target date. Ms. Armagost shared that while she saw self check as a convenience and sometimes used it, she preferred the personal interaction with a staff member at the circulation desk; Mr. Soneda responded that he had heard that comment often since self check was installed. Ms. Redfern agreed with Ms. Armagost’s “convenience” comments. Mr. Repplier added a bit of levity in “telling a story on myself” about using the wrong barcodes to try to check out books at self check.

## **H. Director's Reports:**

**a. 2016 Library Goals, progress report.** Mr. Soneda did not have new information to share, but noted continued progress in outreach/partnering related efforts for both the Celebrating a Century of Service project and with community partners identified in library goals, such as the Boys & Girls Club and Mount Vernon School District.

**b. Outreach (100 year anniversary).** Mr. Soneda reported that planning on the Centennial Social was going very well. With the enriching but also complicating folding of the New Old Time Chautauqua visit into the Centennial Social, Mr. Soneda shared that he expected a great, but also somewhat “messy” event on July 30. Mr. King shared some ideas on how to keep big events like the Centennial Social under control. Mr. Soneda added that he appreciated the support the event had received from Parks staff, particularly Rashel O’Neil.

**c. Staffing update.** Mr. Soneda reported that there were no new hires and that the relatively recent hires into the part-time Public Services Assistant and Page roles were doing well.

**d. other.** Mr. Soneda reminded trustees that he would be presenting the monthly Library Update to City Council at Council’s July 13 meeting and invited trustees to attend. Mr. Craig asked if help was still needed at the library booth for the July 16 Farmers Market; Mr. Soneda responded that one additional volunteer was needed for the afternoon shift. Mr. Craig then volunteered to fill the shift; Mr. Soneda thanked him.

## **I. Around the Table:**

**Mr. Verrell** apologized for being a bit late due to heavy northbound traffic and passed.

**Ms. Redfern** asked about proctoring at the library; Mr. Soneda observed that proctoring for students taking tests, mostly online tests and usually for university credit, was something that certain library staff members were registered to do and while proctoring did not happen often, it was a very positive service the library offered.

**Mr. Repplier** asked about the Adult Program statistic, noting that it had gone from 25 in June of 2015 to 486 in June of 2016. Mr. Soneda did not have a specific reason for the increase, but noted that with programs like class or other youth group tours of the library and presentations by library staff in the community often ebbing and flowing in numbers, significant changes in program numbers month to month was not unusual. He did acknowledge that this was an unusually big change and that he would find out the specific cause for that change and report back at the next meeting.

**Ms. Armagost** passed.

**J. Board Chair's Report:**

**a. Safety and security in library and surrounding areas.** Mr. Craig shared the letter he had written to the mayor on the subject of safety and security in the library and surrounding areas, reminding trustees that they had voted unanimously to approve the drafting of such a letter by Mr. Craig. He noted that he had run a draft of the letter past Mr. Soneda and had incorporated one small suggestion from him. Trustees discussed the letter. Mr. King offered some observations about why safety/security issues were increasing, not just at the library but in many parts of the downtown area. Mr. Verrell raised an issue about whether such a letter could have unintended circumstances, such as raising expectations among both staff and public that immediate strong action would be taken by the library as well as police and City as a whole. Mr. Soneda pointed out that measured and effective actions had already been taken by library, police and City as a whole; Mr. Verrell clarified that he was talking about the risk of "raising false hopes" and the potential for disappointment if high expectations beyond what had been done were not met. Mr. Craig and others acknowledged that risk. Mr. Craig felt strongly that a statement of support and concern for library staff from the trustees was important and the right thing for the trustees to do as mayorally appointed representatives of the public. Mr. King urged that regardless of decision by trustees, staff and trustees should know what the message on safety and security was, be provide with succinct talking points, and speak in a "standard voice" when in dialog with the public on safety and security issues. He asked whether Mr. Soneda had been in regular dialog with the mayor's office and with Police Department on safety and security issues; Mr. Soneda assured Mr. King that he had regularly conversed with both on these issues and again that he felt very supported by the City. Ms. Armagost noted parallels, on safety and security concerns, between the public library and schools. Mr. Craig asked Mr. Verrell if his concerns with sending this letter to the mayor had been addressed. Mr. Verrell noted that he still had some concerns but felt the core "message" that Mr. Craig referred to, that of letting staff know that the Library Board expressed solidarity with staff on safety and security issues, was enough for him to support the signing and sending of the letter to the mayor. Ms. Armagost then moved that the trustees approve the signing of the letter by Mr. Craig on behalf of the Board and the sending of said signed letter to the mayor. Mr. Repplier seconded the motion; all were in favor.

**K. Adjournment:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:38 PM. The next meeting of the board of trustees will be on Thursday, August 4, 2016 at 5:30 PM at the library.

Minutes by Brian Soneda, Library Director